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Notes of the Month.

Since the last number of this magazine appeared, the news of the South Pole tragedy has come to hand, causing world-wide sorrow and regret. Captain Scott and his intrepid comrades, after achieving the object of their journey by reaching the South Pole, succumbed on their return journey to the severe and continued strain of shortage of provisions and abnormal weather. The spirit in which they met the end appears in the last records left by the leader and in the sublime self-sacrifice evinced by Captain Oates. No suggestion of failure can be associated with conduct so great and achievements so stupendous. All that they did and dared gives them honoured place in the roll of earth's truest heroes, and the memory of it will certainly endure so long as human nature is thrilled by, and shows itself capable of, such supreme self-sacrifice. Hence, while we cannot disregard the terrible cost paid for the advancement of knowledge, and while we must necessarily feel profound sympathy for the friends and relatives of the heroic dead, we also realise that loss is not the last word even in so sad an event. The moral values—the challenge to man's noblest qualities, the thought that our common human nature can rise superior to such a strain and stand such a test—these remain, and will be potent for increasing good.

* *

The following beautiful verses from James Russell Lowell's Ode, recited at Harvard Commemoration, July 21, 1865, seem to express even better than any lines written expressly for the occasion a fitting tribute to the South Pole heroes. The verses were quoted by Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., at the conclusion of the memorial sermon preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on Sunday morning, 16th February.

" I with uncovered head
Salute the sacred dead,
Who went, and who return not.—Say not so !
'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,
But the high faith that failed not by the way ;
Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave ;
No ban of endless night exiles the brave ;
And to the saner mind
We rather seem the dead that stayed behind.
Blow trumpets, all your exultations blow !
For never shall their aureoled presence lack :
I see them muster in a gleaming row,
With ever-youthful brows that nobler show ;
We find in our dull road their shining track :

In every nobler mood,
We feel the orient of their spirit glow,
Part of our life's unalterable good,
Of all our saintlier aspiration ;
They come transfigured back,
Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,
Beautiful evermore, and with the rays
Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation ! "

—James Russell Lowell.

* *

The present month will be marked by a celebration which will serve to recall great deeds achieved under very different conditions from those characterising polar discoveries and expeditions. March 19th is the hundredth anniversary of the birth of David Livingstone, and in many Christian communities his life and exploits will be emphasised. Whether we think of him as the earnest and ardent Christian missionary, risking all in his endeavours to carry the light of the Gospel into the darkest places of the earth, or as the indomitable explorer, through whose expeditions our knowledge of vast districts in Africa was wonderfully advanced, his life's history is one of singular interest and charm. His personality made an impression upon the most savage folk, and often, when force could have accomplished little, his frank and fearless presence carried him through with honour and success. The fact that we as a religious community do not labour so prominently in the foreign mission field as many orthodox communions do should not make us less eager to pay a tribute to a courageous and great-hearted believer like David Livingstone. A faith which could produce and sustain the achievements credited to him is a great asset in the world's salvation, and it behoves us to make it plain that our own is no less capable of unselfish effort.

* *

It is a matter for profound regret that the negotiations in London failed to put an end to the war in the Balkan Peninsula. The resumption of hostilities has only aggravated the mischief without apparently affecting the the final issue. To the horrors of war amongst the peoples engaged must now be added those of assassination and internecine conflict amongst the Turks themselves. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and the latest atrocities might have been avoided had the Turks faced the facts and accepted the logic of events. The longer the conflict goes on the greater is the risk that other nationalities will be embroiled, and the last stage be infinitely worse than the first. A century ago misdirected human ambition made of Europe a scene devastated by the movements of large armies over a wide area. It is sincerely to be hoped that the year 1913 is to be spared a conflict even more terrible than that due to Napoleon. May God direct the hearts and strengthen the hands of all who everywhere are labouring for the great cause of peace.

REVELATION.

By Rev. M. Watkins.

" Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee." Ezekiel ii. : 1

THESE words of the prophet are arresting, and in their presence we ask what message can they have for us to-day ?

One thing there is upon which Biblical scholarship is nearly united with regard to the Old Testament, and that is, that the end of all Hebrew prophecy was to know God, the Lord of Hosts, and His righteousness. In these days we can at best only attempt imaginative pictures of this moving belief and its influence. From the cradle was the Hebrew mind tutored into this religious faith, and be assured the tutoring was not left to chance. By early association the minds of Hebrew children were taught to think of the living God, in metaphor and simile, as near and far, and as holding converse with the chosen of Israel—the Seer, the Man of God, the Prophet.

Of these things there was no doubt in the true Hebrew's mind that they were cardinal elements in his religion, this intimacy between the Chosen and God.

The passage therefore chosen as our text, whatever else it may mean,

means, so I take it, that the prophet had reached the goal of his faith—that he knew God ; and more, that he was one of the Almighty's instruments for carrying into effect the great purposes of the divine life. On the face of it, this conception may seem crude ; its very human view of revelation may jar discordantly upon our religious sensibilities as savouring too much of things earthly. To me, however, few conceptions are more beautiful in their simplicity and more intensely human. God is brought so near to us, represented as holding converse with the prophet. What could be more effective in its appeal, what truer in reality, what fuller of the poetry of life ?

In the presence of such an idea as this, one is perplexed by the thought whether the critical spirit has not been over-developed in many of our Churches and that to the sad hindrance of spontaneous expression of certain true religious emotions. This may be a superficial observation, and perhaps has no real ground beneath it in the actual life of our Churches. I trust this is true, but the feeling is very present at times that throbbing outbursts of the soul are given tardy greeting beside the critical utterances of a cold highly trained intellect.

Let the critical faculty be all eyes and all ears when dealing with facts which form the legitimate realm of the critical : but let us also be equally sure that the critical machinery must be laid aside when we come to expressions and poetic figures of speech that appeal to our truest sentiments and touch our finest sensibilities.

To interpret the Bible, one must be more or less filled with something of the same spirit that inspired its writings; otherwise, its everlasting truths will be missed. The interpreter should feel within his own soul that there in that saving spirit, manifest in the life and utterances of the prophet, is to be found the core of the eternal life.

Would it then, think you, help us to feel deep down in our hearts this simple fact that there is as much truth now as in the days of old in the concept of God speaking as man to man, communicating to him His everlasting truths ? Personally, I am convinced it would, for then the consciousness that we can know God could not fail to bring to our minds the supreme conviction that every truth felt in our brains has come from God, and must of necessity be made a vital force in our lives.

" Son of man, stand upon thy feet." Is not the figure full of meaning and life suggestive of the uprising soul's response to the call ? Are we not able to picture the figure, and what then ? What of the thought to become conscious in the sense the prophet was conscious that he knew the Lord, that to him had come the divine command to stand upon his feet ro receive a message from the living God ? There is something in the thought that enlarges our view of life, that deepens the religious sense, that expands the soul ; and we feel how it is possible for us to be translated into a tremendously greater world than this of material being with the more intense feeling of God's nearer presence.

This is one of God's ways with us. To some the thought is perplexing—that we can have a personal consciousness of God's nearer presence. Somewhere it is true. We have in the background of our minds a vague, doubtful notion that such a thing is possible, but so imperfect and improbable is it that we never dare think it necessary to bring such into the foreground of our thought and seriously considering the matter in relation to ourselves. To some persons we say this experience may be possible, but to us it is out of the range of even reasonable thought. The question is so stupendous that God should deign to give one thought upon a creature so unworthy, let alone command us to be one of His instruments. But what are the actual experiences of God's prophets, His teachers, the quickeners of the timid, and inspirers of the brave and true ? You will find when their experience is given to the world that it resembles very much our own when we have been lifted up into the presence of a loftier power.

" I was at Mary's," wrote J. Russell

Lowell to his friend, G. B. Loring, "in 1842, and, happening to say something of the presence of the Divine, of whom I said I was dimly aware, Mr. Putnam entered into an argument with me on spiritual matters. As I was speaking, the whole system rose up before me like a vague destiny looming from the abyss. I never before so clearly felt the Spirit of God in me and around me. The whole room seemed to me full of God, and I spoke with the calmness and clearness of a prophet."

In all ages this has been the language of the "seer," the "prophet"; he speaks as he feels, and the vision that comes to him depends no more on reasoning than upon the discrimination of a series of colours in the rainbow. To know one has to begin with the alphabet to become as a little child, and master the elements of a few big things which shall lead us unto God: to grasp one or two of the great principles of the Gospel of self-sacrifice and duty, as given unto us by the Master. Then shall the mystery of Ezekiel's figure be unfolded to us, the call of Samuel understood, and the poet's vision imagined—

"It was the voice of God that spake
In silence to thy silent heart;
And bade each worthier thought awake,
And every dream of earth depart."

PIONEERS OF LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY.

By Rev. G. L. Phelps.

II. THEODORE PARKER. (1810–1860.)

THEODORE PARKER was 30 years Channing's junior, and consequently had not the same theological difficulties to face. Channing had to fight against a grim and rigid Calvinism, Parker found his bitterest opponents in his own household of faith. Liberal Christianity was already in the air when Parker was at the theological school, and found in him a ready disciple. On leaving the theological school, he wrote—"God has prospered me in my studies, and I am now ready to go forth, but not without dread and fear. What an immense change has taken place in my opinions and feelings upon all the main points of inquiry since I entered this place." That his fear was not groundless he was soon to discover. He was already suspected of being "advanced," and the Unitarian congregations of New England were at that time timid and conservative, so that he had great difficulty in getting settled. His ability made itself felt, however, and before a year had passed several Churches were wanting him, and he settled at West Roxbury.

When he began his ministry Parker was already a truth-seeker—not a mere echo. We shall be able to understand his subsequent career if we note the significance of his own declaration: "At the beginning I resolved to preach the natural laws of man as they are writ in his constitution, no less and no more. After preaching a few months in various places, and feeling my way into the consciousness of man, I determined to preach nothing as religion which I had not experienced inwardly and made my own—knowing it by heart." The important thing about Liberal Christianity, as I understand it, is not the views we hold, but the way we hold them; and this was the real cause of the hostility to Parker on the part of many Unitarians. They rejected the doctrines of the Trinity and eternal punishment, because they held them to be unscriptural. Parker rejected them because he could find nothing in his own spiritual experience to support them. They held the Bible to be a supernatural book and Jesus to be a supernatural person. Parker held both in high esteem, but took the seat of religious authority to be the reason and conscience. There was bound to be conflict sooner or later, as there was a fundamental principle involved.

In 1838 Emerson created a great stir in the religious life of America by his Divinity School Address at Cambridge, and Parker felt that it was a call to speak out more clearly and boldly. What this meant can be gathered from the pronouncement of Professor Norton, one of the chief

opponents of the new movement—"The latest form of infidelity is distinguished by assuming the Christian name, while it strikes directly at the root of faith in Christianity, and indirectly of all religion, by denying the miracles attesting the Divine mission of Christ."

The storm broke, as far as Parker was concerned, three years later, when, at an ordination service in Boston, he preached a sermon on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." Reading the sermon to-day, we may perhaps wonder why so great a fuss was made about it among people who seemed to hold the same views as the preacher. It was not so much what he said as what was implied. Parker had not yet given up belief in the miracles, but he held that the truth of Christianity in no way depended on them. Divine truth is not attested by miracle, but by its appeal to what is best in ourselves. This was sufficient to brand Parker a dangerous heretic, and an attempt was made to drive him out of the Unitarian Association. Let the man be judged by his own words, not by the slanders of his enemies. This is how, in this same sermon, he expressed his belief regarding Jesus—"Measure him by the best of men—how little and low they appear! Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet, perhaps, come short of the mark. But still was he not our brother—the son of man, as we are—the Son of God, like ourselves? His excellence—was it not human excellence? His wisdom, love, piety—sweet and celestial as they were—are they not what we also may attain? In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble." And of Christianity, he said —"It gives us the largest liberty of the sons of God; and were all men Christians after the fashion of Jesus, this variety would be a thousand times greater than now: for Christianity is not a system of doctrines, but rather a method of attaining oneness with God. . . . Real Christianity gives men new life. It would not make Christ the despot of the soul, but the brother of all men. It would not tell us that even he had exhausted the fulness of God, so that he could create none greater; for with him all things are possible, and neither Old Testament nor New Testament ever hints that creation exhausts the Creator. Still less would it tell us the wisdom, the piety, the love, the manly excellence of Jesus was the result of miraculous agency alone, but that it was won—like the excellence of humbler men—by faithful obedience to him who gave his Son such ample heritage. . . . It would lead us to form Christ in the heart, on which Paul laid such stress, and work out our own salvation by this. For it is not so much by the Christ who lived so blameless and beautiful eighteen centuries ago that we are saved directly, but by the Christ we form in our hearts and live out in our daily life that we save ourselves, God working with us both to will and to do."

It was for preaching thus that Parker was fiercely attacked by the Unitarians of his day. His own people at West Roxbury had learned to know him and to love him; they did not all agree with all he taught, but they stood by him. Some Boston folk who sympathised with him invited him to explain his position more fully in a course of lectures; this he did, and the lectures were afterwards made into a book, entitled, "A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion." But the feeling against Parker was strong, and most Unitarian ministers declined to exchange with him. Opposition did but call forth greater energy: he lectured and preached, read widely, wrote books, did his parish work, and laboured unceasingly till his health gave way, and he was obliged to take a year's holiday in Europe.

All the time his mind was growing, his outlook broadening, and the opposition to him became more bitter. Most of the Unitarian Churches were now closed against him, but in 1845 a number of gentlemen met in Boston and passed one brief resolution—"That

the Rev. Theodore Parker have a chance to be heard in Boston." The result was that "The Melodeon" was engaged, and there Sunday, by Sunday, he preached, keeping on his West Roxbury work as well. Within a year it became necessary to find some larger meeting-place, and "The Music Hall" was secured, and the 28th Congregational Society of Boston formed. The Music Hall had seating accommodation for 3,000 people, and soon there were 7,000 names on the register of the unconventional Church. For fourteen years Parker held this great congregation, and it is doubtful whether any Unitarian has ever preached regularly to such large numbers. Space will not permit more than a passing reference to the valiant service he rendered to every good cause—peace, temperance, education, prison reform, liberation of the slaves, the betterment of social conditions. What wonder he wore himself out and died—all too soon—in his 50th year!

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE.

By Miss Mellone.

MANY people will exclaim at this title. For them woman's suffrage is a matter of broken windows and pestered cabinet ministers. Much reading of an anti-suffrage Press, eager for good copy, has taught them to consider the average suffragist as an ill-dressed female, armed with hatchet or bag of stones, just emerged from prison, where she could not even submit quietly to the punishment she so richly deserved, but must plague long-suffering wardresses and doctors by adopting the hunger strike. Others, more lenient, regard the suffragist as fairly well represented by Mrs. Ward's sketch of the lady who goes about in untidy boots, preaches the suffrage on any and every occasion, and refuses to take her share in nursing a sorely stricken and only brother, because a Feminist Congress in Paris has the first claim on her time.

But there are others who sometimes wonder whether there be not more in this movement than appears in the doings and sayings of either the typical militant, or of Mrs. Ward's eager propagandist. Many nowadays are beginning to ask, "What is at the heart of this movement? What is the inspiring force which drives some women to face physical suffering of no light kind, others to scorn delights and live laborious days in the hope of so serving the cause of woman? In other words: What is the connection between the woman's movement and religion?"

I believe the connection may best be expressed in two sentences quoted from ancient writers, whom we all regard as inspired. Turn to the account of the Creation, contained in the first chapter of Genesis, and you will find there the words "male and female created He them. And God blessed them." Turn to a much later part of the same inspired Book, and you will find there the command: "Bear ye one another's burdens." These two sayings form the religious basis of the woman's movement.

For this movement is based on the ethical view of Christ, that men and women are human beings, and that every human being separately and equally is an end—an end in itself, and that in no case can it be made merely the means to another human being's end. If we think of Christ's dealings with women, and of the astonishment with which his dealings with women were met: if we think of him talking to the woman of Samaria, or to Martha, or to Mary of Bethany, or to the woman who was a sinner, or to that other woman who was a sinner, we are met with an unmistakable principle. He treated women as human beings, born to fulfil their own end, not merely to be a means to other men s ends. There is nothing in the world so awful as the indignation of Christ. And we know what was his indignation against the attitude of men towards the class represented by those unhappy women who came to him in their misery as to a friend. And in that indignation you see his fundamental agreement with

all that is deepest and truest in the woman's movement. We who work in this movement claim in the words of St. Paul that in Christ Jesus is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female, but Christ is all in all. On all alike the same moral law is binding: on all alike rests the same responsibility—to realise themselves as individual human beings. But it may be asked: what is there to hinder this self-realisation? What is the need of emancipating people who, in fact, are free already. To answer this we must turn to the second saying quoted above—"Bear ye one another's burdens." This is the motto of our local suffrage society, and I suppose is rather a puzzle to many.

Let me briefly sketch two scenes from real life. The answer to the puzzle may be contained in them.

I see a bright fireside. A woman sits by it. Two children play on the rug. A step sounds at the door, and the children spring up with a glad cry, and the woman turns with a smiling face to greet the broad shouldered man who enters. It is a picture of a sheltered home. That woman has realised the end for which she was created. In that home man and woman in different ways are doing each their own work in the world, each helping and encouraging the other, each dependent on the other for what that other alone can give.

Take another picture. A little knot of people stand by the river side in London. They are watching the police rescue a would-be suicide. The poor thing is taken to the police station and is asked what drove her—for it is a woman—to the act. The answer is simple. She was tired of life. She made Army trousers at 2½d. a pair, and found it hard to realise the end for which she was created on those terms. Asked what employer was so base as to pay that wage, she replied she worked for an Army contractor. Questioned later, this contractor stated that the Government practice of accepting the lowest tender in these cases, and the absence of any fair wages clause for women in Government contracts made it impossible in these days of keen competition to give a higher payment. So the matter ended.

"Bear ye one another's burdens." Has the happy woman in her sheltered home, with her children round her, hearing her husband's step at the door, any responsibility towards this miserable half-drowned creature, dragged from the dark Thames water, which she found less cold than the darker waters of misery which had flowed over her head for many years?

But what has the suffrage to do with this? I cannot answer that question here. To do so would be to write a suffrage article, and I do not ask the hospitality of this paper for suffrage propaganda. I can only quote the words of an anti-suffragist, Professor Dicey, who stated that since working men had received their vote wages had risen from fifty to a hundred per cent. while the wages of women had during the same period tended to remain at the starvation level, below which they cannot permanently sink. I can only state in the most emphatic form the conviction of every suffrage worker that the economic condition of women cannot be improved until the vote is won, and that a large number of the social evils of our day arise from the economic position.

So we ask the women who are free, who need no emancipation, to come out of their sheltered homes and help those other women—five million of them in the British Isles—who have to fight their own battle, win their own bread. Many of these cannot help themselves, the struggle has been too hard; the mere effort to gain that daily bread has exhausted all their energies. It is the women who have never suffered, whom the social, economic, and legal disabilities of their sex have never affected, to whom we look. It is they who must help. "Now we that are strong ought to bear the burdens of those that are weak, and not to please ourselves." Those words express the spirit of the suffrage movement.

"True hearts spread and heave
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun."
—*Vaughan.*

BALLYMONEY.

A specially convened Service was conducted on Sunday, February 16, by Rev. A. Turner. At the close of service a meeting of the congregation was held with a view to drawing up a call to a successor in the ministry to Rev. David Matts. On a poll being taken, it was decided by a majority to give a call to Rev. Felix Holt, B.A., and so the presiding minister declared Mr. Holt duly elected. The call was subsequently signed by most of those present, and then the meeting was closed with the benediction. * *

Reports from Newtownards and Templepatrick are unavoidably held over till next month.—ED.

Lesson Notes for Teachers.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

SCENES, INCIDENTS, AND LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

IN connection with the series of lessons which will be contributed month by month to this Magazine, the teachers should observe the following hints :—

1. Always take the Bible reading. When the children are old enough let them read round ; where they are too young for this the teacher should read it, or, in the case of very little children, tell it in his or her own words.

2. The memory verse gives the point of the lesson, and should be committed to memory by the children and repeated the following Sunday.

3. The notes should be used—not simply read to the children. The teacher should have them in his mind and develop the lesson in his own words, using all the illustrations he can.

4. I should suggest the use of Dr. Carpenter's " Life in Palestine when Jesus lived " (price 1s.) as a valuable book of reference. Also instructive pictures, illustrating the country in which Jesus lived and worked, can be got in Rev. T. P. Spedding's " Scenes and Stories from the life of Jesus " (price 1s.). There are twelve picture cards, one of which might be used each week with great advantage by bringing the scene home to the scholars.

Lesson I. *The River Jordan.* Read Luke 3. 1-14. *Memory verse,* Luke 3. 4.

Purpose of Lesson. To make actual the place, time and events of the Baptism. (Use picture No. 1 in Spedding's " Scenes.")

1. *The Place.* The Jordan is practically the one river of Palestine. The name comes from Torrent : Descender. It takes about 280 miles to cover 140 miles as the crow flies ; rises 1,100 feet *above* the sea, and ends in the Dead Sea about 1,380 feet *below* sea level ; the valley through which it flows is very fertile. It was regarded as sacred : in very early times had a special deity. See story of Jacob's wrestling at Ford Jabbok (Genesis 32. 22-32) ; and note the old belief in water spirits, naiads, etc. Its waters were regarded as purifying. See story of Naaman (2 Kings, 5). Even now the sound and power of rushing water make us think there are unseen influences at work.

2. *Time.* A few years after the birth of Jesus the Romans took complete control of Judea ; the Jews suffered greatly, especially under Pontius Pilate. Hence the whole Jewish race were looking forward intensely to a Messiah to come and set them free. See the Lord's Prayer (" Thy kingdom come.")

3. *The man.* John the Baptist belonged to a class of deeply religious men, who held that repentance must precede any new kingdom. Many washed themselves in the Jordan ; but John said that to escape the wrath to come their souls, as well as their bodies, must be clean. He differed from Jesus in that his religion was based on fear. (Read " Life in Palestine," pp. 14 *and* 16 ; also pp. 73-78.)

Lesson II. The Baptism. Read Mark 1. 1-11. *Memory verse,* Mark 1. 8.

Purpose. To show that Jesus was helped and inspired by John.

1. *Jesus and John.* Jesus and his father were both carpenters (Mark 6. 3). He was always deeply religious: was well known to John (Mark 1. 8, and Luke 7. 19). Jesus and John had much in common, and no doubt Jesus learnt much from John. The Pharisees loved to compare the two to Jesus' disadvantage. Jesus speaks most highly of John (Luke 7. 28). Thus he would naturally come to John for baptism. John was indeed the forerunner; and when he was thrown into prison by Herod, Jesus took up his work and magnified it by his own wonderful powers.

2. The *Baptism.* Note (a) *the significance of Baptism.* No doubt originally the mere washing was thought enough. But John made the washing a sign of spiritual cleansing (*e.g.*, modern Baptists); (b), *John's humility.* He declared that Jesus was greater than he. Jesus baptized with Holy Spirit. Helped by John's baptism and teaching, he was able to withstand the temptation. Compare story of Samuel and Eli (1 Samuel 3) with story of Jesus and John.

Lesson III. Jesus' teaching on Baptism. Read Luke 11. 37-40, 18. 4-14. *Memory verse,* Luke 11. 40.

1. *Baptism must be spiritual.* John baptized with water, but Jesus with Holy Spirit. Many people think that if they are clean and well dressed that is enough. But cleanliness comes *next* to Godliness, not *before.* Some Pharisees were inclined to put external washing before internal cleansing. Hence they prided themselves on being properly clad, properly clean, properly behaved. That is all necessary, but without pure thoughts and unselfish desires cleanliness is quite in vain. Once a little girl trod on a loaf she was taking to a poor woman just to keep her new boots clean. That was very selfish indeed.

2. *Baptism demands Humility.* If we are proud, conceited, and selfish, our hearts are too dirty for God to receive us. *e.g.* Parable of Pharisee and Publican (explain Publican—tax-gatherer: a most despised class). The Pharisee could only see other people's faults and his own virtues. The Publican saw only his own faults. One was proud he had done so much: the other sorry he had not done more.

Lesson IV. Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee. Read Luke 4. 14-24. *Memory verse,* Luke 4. 22.

Purpose. To show the influence of Jesus' surroundings on his teaching.

1. *The Place. Galilee.* In the north it was rugged, with caves where bandits dwelt; many fortresses to keep the people in order. In the south it was a great agricultural and industrial district. Nazareth (still exists) was a small town on the side of a green hill, with gardens and cornfields below. Galilee was famous for fish, corn, indigo, and balsam. *The Sea of Galilee*: about 12 miles long and 6 miles wide: on the east high hills, on the west "the Garden of Galilee." Here Jesus would see the lilies of the field, the corn, the mustard trees, all of which he mentioned beautifully in his teaching.

2. *The People*: a mixed stock, more enterprising and less rigid in their views than the Jews of Judea. They were hardy, free-and-easy, industrious people. They generously welcomed the new prophet (Luke 4. 14-15), except only at Nazareth. Jesus had grown up there, and played games, *e.g.*, weddings and funerals. The people knew him just as a carpenter, and could scarcely believe their ears when he came out as a prophet (Luke 4. 22-24). Familiarity breeds contempt. Foolishly enough we seldom think of looking for beauty and goodness close at hand. From among the Galileans Jesus chose his disciples—just ordinary fishermen and business men, but all ready to follow him.

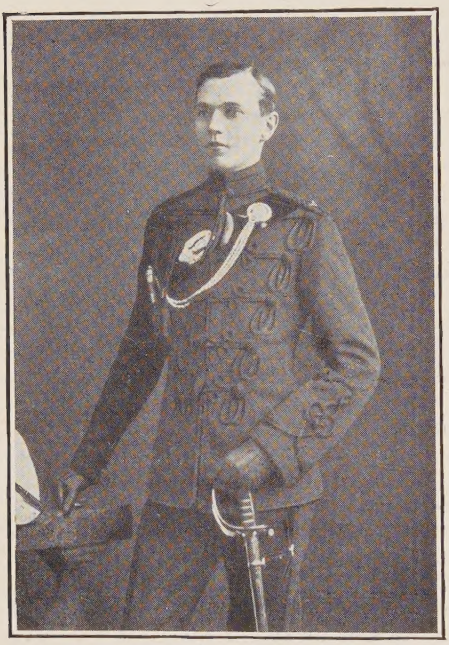
Obituary.

Lieutenant Pierson J. Smyth.

WE have to record with deep regret the death of Lieutenant Pierson J. Smyth, younger son of Mr. John Smyth, M.A., of Milltown House, Banbridge.

Lieutenant Smyth was stationed with his regiment, the 1st Battalion

Royal Irish Rifles, at Kamptee, C.P., India. Although not of a very robust constitution, his letters home had given his friends no grounds for anxiety, and he was looking forward to coming home on furlough this month. On January 28th, however, a cablegram was received by his father announcing that he had been operated on for abscess of the liver. The operation was said to be successful, but the next day a further message stated that he had passed away.



LIEUTENANT PIERSON J. SMYTH.

Lieutenant Smyth was born in 1880, was educated at Campbell College, Belfast, and Giggleswick, Yorkshire. On leaving school his first intention was to enter the engineering profession, and with that object in view he began the study of that science at Glasgow University. Subsequently, however, he decided to enter the army, and in 1902 he joined the Donegal Artillery, a Militia Regiment. In 1904 he was gazetted to the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles, then stationed at Meerut, N.W.P., India, and joined his regiment in December of that year. Later, the regiment was transferred to Maymyo, Burmah, and then to Kamptee, Central India.

Lieutenant Smyth possessed a frank and genial disposition and sterling qualities of character. He was popular among his brother officers, and had made such progress in his profession that he was first on the list for promotion, and his captaincy was expected shortly. Whenever he was home, he worshipped regularly with his family at our Church in Banbridge.

We desire to tender our sincere and respectful sympathy with his venerable father and the other members of the family in their great bereavement.

At the morning service at the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, Banbridge, Rev. Edgar Lockett (a former minister of the congregation), in the course of a reference to the sad event, said that since they had last met for worship a great and poignant sorrow had befallen one of the families of that congregation, and he felt that it was fitting, and what they would all wish, that there should be some public expression, however inadequate, of what was in the minds and hearts of all of them.

Lieutenant Pierson Smyth had not of recent years been a very familiar figure at their Sunday gatherings, as duty to his King and country had called him to a distant part of the Empire. But he was reared in their religious fellowship; he was a son of the venerable Senior Elder of their Session, and whenever he was home from India he was a regular worshipper with them. Struck down in the prime of his manhood, at the threshold of a promising career, far from kith and kin, the suddenness and unexpectedness of the stroke—all the circumstances seemed peculiarly and inexpressibly sad. He (the speaker) should not try to say much. Words were poor things at such times; but he wished to endeavour to express their heartfelt sympathy with the stricken family—twice stricken within a few weeks—in their great loss. His prayer and theirs was just the simple one that the Heavenly Father, he who was a present help in

time of trouble, he who could and would make all things work together for good to them that love him, and who was the God, not of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him—their prayer was that God would comfort the bereaved ones. Once more they were reminded that here they had no abiding city. Let them, with God's help, seek after that which is to come, the city which had the foundations whose builder and maker was God—the city promised of God to those who did seek it, and where he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things shall have passed away and all things shall be made new.

At the conclusion of the service the Dead March in Saul was played by the Organist.

For the Children.

By Rev. J. Worthington, B.A.

Give!

"GIVE, and it shall be given to you," said Jesus. *Give!* I am afraid most of us think more of what we are about to receive than what we can give, especially on our birthdays. I read a few days ago of three young people—two girls and a boy—who were walking along the road together, hand in hand, thinking about the birthday parties they had just been having, when, turning a bend in the road, they suddenly knocked up against an elderly gentleman, with a parcel under his arm. The boy, John, at once said they were very sorry, and the elderly gentleman hoped no one was hurt, and warned the young people about keeping a sharp look-out when they were turning corners or crossing the road. And then he added —"But I noticed you were very quiet and thoughtful as you came along, and, as this is so unusual with young people, I have been wondering what you were thinking about. Now, will you tell me?" At first John and the two girls felt rather shy, but, as the elderly gentleman looked at them in such a pleasant and kindly manner, they felt they were able to tell him. And John spoke first. "I was thinking about my birthday party," he said, "and the glorious time we had. I had such a lot of presents, and they were bigger and better than those I received last year." "Indeed," said the kindly old gentleman. And then Mary spoke. "And I was thinking of my birthday party, too, and of the nice games we played, and the nice dress my mother gave me, and how everybody liked it, and thought how nice I looked. It was awfully nice" (Mary frequently used the words "awfully" and "nice" without thinking of what they mean). "Humph!" said the kindly old gentleman; and then, turning to Elsie, he said, "And what were you thinking about, little one?" And Elsie, after a little hesitation, said, "I was thinking of my birthday party, too, and how kind everybody was to me; and I was wondering how I could help mother, who gave me the party, and what I could give to her." And the elderly gentleman, taking the parcel from under his arm, said, "Here, take and give this to mother" (the parcel contained a book for grown-up people). "You can give many things, but remember that what mother wants, above all, is your love and obedience." And then he walked away. Elsie, you see, was beginning to understand what it means to "give," which is more than can be said of John and Mary.

But now I should like you to notice that Jesus tells us that every time we "give" something is given to us. "Give, and it shall be given you," he said. But what? What is "it"? Well, "it" means something corresponding with what you give. A Swiss peasant was one day walking over the hills to a village some four or five miles away. When he started the sun was shining, and there was every prospect of a fine day. But after a time the sun disappeared, the clouds began to gather, and large flakes of snow began

to fall. The peasant trudged along resolutely facing the wind and the snow, but the clouds thickened, the snow fell heavily, and walking became difficult and fatiguing. His limbs ached, a feeling of drowsiness came over him, and he felt as if he would like to lie down and sleep. He was just about to let himself fall in the soft snow, when his foot struck against a heap lying across his path, and, looking down, he saw it was the body of a man who had been overcome by the storm and the cold. Rousing himself, and summoning all the strength he had left, he took hold of the helpless form and dragged it to a rock close by, and as he rubbed the half-frozen limbs and chest he was gratified to see signs of life appearing. But more wonderful still, the harder he rubbed, the warmer he himself became, and the blood flowed back into his own limbs and made him strong and brave again. The two men were saved. The peasant, by his effort to save the other's life, had saved his own. He had used his strength for another, and his own strength was restored. He gave, and something corresponding to what he gave was given to him.

I once knew a youth whose intelligence was not very bright and whose character was not very attractive, but who was asked one day by his minister to take a class in the Sunday School. The idea of teaching did not specially appeal to him. He was modest enough to feel that he needed to be taught himself, rather than that he should try to teach others. But his minister encouraged him, and at last he consented. At first he did not specially like it; he was at a loss what to talk about, and he did not give any special attention to his boys. But after a time he found the work growing upon him. The boys became more interesting to him. He began to notice differences of temperament, intelligence, and character. He began to feel he would like to help them. He prepared his lessons more carefully, and tried to do them as much good as he could. And his boys responded, and were attentive and obedient. But others noticed *a change in the teacher himself.* His character became stronger, his intelligence brighter, the secret of which was that in trying to improve others he had improved himself, in trying to inform others he had informed himself. He gave, and something corresponding with what he gave was given to him.

Let us then "give." Let us be helpful and loving. Let us try to make everybody happy, and happiness will be given to us.

THE SUSTENTATION FUND.

We print below a further list of contributions to the Sustentation Fund. One thousand donations have now been promised or received. In the list below all the contributors, except one, are from the Clough congregation. Twenty-two congregations have now made their returns, two more are expecting to be able to send in their lists in the course of a week or two, so that not more than five congregations remain to complete the canvass of the whole Church. Donations will now be published as they are received, and we hope to be able to publish a list each month:

R. P. Lusk, Larne	£5	0	0
CLOUGH CONGREGATION.			
Miss M'Cammon	£25	0	0
Mrs. Jackson	25	0	0
D. G. M'Cammon	25	0	0
John Nelson	5	0	0
David Shaw	5	0	0
William Moffett	5	0	0
James Shaw	4	0	0
John Hazlett	2	0	0
Hugh Donnan	2	0	0
J. Donnan	2	0	0
John Nelson, jun.	1	10	0
Mrs. Ferguson	1	0	0
James Logan	1	0	0
Jane M'Coubrey	1	0	0
Samuel M'Coubrey	1	0	0
Mrs. Neill	1	0	0
Mrs. Hamilton	1	0	0
Robert Shaw	1	0	0
W. J. Watt	1	0	0
J. Wilson	1	0	0
F. Wilson	1	0	0
Mrs. Kirkpatrick	1	0	0
W. J. Coburn	1	0	0
John Kilpatrick	1	0	0
Robert Ferguson	1	0	0
John Larmour	1	0	0
Robert Hogg	1	0	0
William Hay	1	0	0
Hugh Robinson	1	0	0

David Ferguson	£1	0	0
Mrs. M'Coubrey	0	10	0
Stafford Campbell	0	10	0
James Long	0	10	0
Miss Logan	0	10	0
Miss Hanna	0	10	0
David Neill	0	10	0
Hugh Hagan	0	10	0
Mrs. Smith	0	10	0
W. J. Hay	0	10	0
Samuel Robinson	0	10	0
Mrs. Towman	0	10	0
T. Bryans	0	10	0
R. Bryans	0	5	0
Charles Moore	0	5	0
Thomas Murphy	0	5	0
Dr. Luke	0	5	0
Richard Ferguson	0	5	0
Mrs. M'Coubrey, Castlenavan ..	0	3	0
William Magraw	0	2	6
James Ferguson	0	2	6
Mrs. English	0	1	0
Mrs. Crawley	0	1	0
Miss Cochrane	0	1	0
R. Murphy	0	1	0
Total	£133	7	0

BALLYMONEY CONGREGATION.

R. Dick, M.D. ..	£100	0	0
Robert Dick ..	25	0	0
R. D. Pinkerton ..	25	0	0
John T. Burnside ..	10	0	0
John W. Pinkerton ..	10	0	0
John Hamill ..	5	0	0
John Pinkerton ..	5	0	0
John B. Getty ..	5	0	0
James M. G. Getty ..	3	10	0
Mrs. Frank Carter ..	2	10	0
William Gerrow ..	1	10	0
John M'Kay ..	1	0	0
James B. Erskine ..	0	10	0
Sundry Small Subscriptions ..	6	0	0
	£200	0	0
Previously acknowledged	£8,000	0	0

Reports.

Unity Guild.—The January meeting, held in Rosemary Hall, on the 22nd of the month, took the form of a "Ladies' Night," and as such proved highly successful. In spite of the miserable weather there was a very satisfactory attendance. The two papers were "A Study of Dickens' Women Characters," by Mrs. W. C. Dobbin (read in her unavoidable absence by her sister, Mrs. Milligan), and "George Eliot," by Miss M. Greenfield. Both papers proved of a most interesting character, and were read with much charm. In the short after-discussion, Rev. H. J. Rossington said that he must compliment Mrs. Dobbin on the very thorough manner in which she had done her work, as the only woman character he could think of as being omitted was Mrs. Rudge. The meeting of March 19th, in Mountpottinger School-room, when Mr. W. J. Baxter (Dromore) will read a paper on "Charles Lamb," will wind up the Session, except for the Annual Business Meeting in April.

* *

Belfast : First Church.—The Sunday School in connection with the above held its annual gathering on January 29th. A large number of parents and friends, including also past scholars and teachers, were in attendance, when the minister opened the proceedings. A successful year's work had to be chronicled, there being over a hundred scholars on the roll, of whom more than sixty were entitled to, and received, awards. Two scholars had gained special prizes for complete and punctual attendances. It was felt that the new school year could be entered upon most hopefully. During the evening the prizes were distributed by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, musical items were contributed by Mr. James Laird and Mr. Cardew-Buckley (Organist), while a pretty play, entitled, "Christmas Gifts from all Nation ," for which the twenty or more scholars taking part had been very carefully trained by Miss F. Davidson, with the assistance of Miss Wood and Miss L. Nelson, was presented, to the great pleasure and satisfaction of the audience. The pronouncing of the Benediction brought a most enjoyable and successful evening to a close. On the first Sunday morning in February a Dedication Service, similar in character to those held at the same time in preceding years, was conducted by the minister, who, at the close of his address, welcomed into fellowship eight young people of the Sunday School, this making the total of junior members of the congregation thirty-seven since the system of junior membership was instituted.

Holywood.—The monthly meeting of the Total Abstinence Society was held on Tuesday, February 11th. There was a good attendance and an enjoyable programme, to which the following contributed :—Miss Murphy, Miss Mary Greenfield, the Misses May, Elsie, and Nora Patterson, and Mr. Hunter. The Rev. S. W. Chambers, of Holywood, was the speaker, and his bright, interesting address was much appreciated.

* *

Killinchy.—A grand Christmas Concert was held on Thursday evening, December 26th, at 7-30. The entertainment consisted of the following :—Christmas carols effectively rendered by the Choir ; piano and violin selections by the Misses Frame were much enjoyed and applauded ; Miss Annie Stewart, Comber, sang as sweetly as ever, and was greatly appreciated ; recitations of an unusually high order by Miss Patterson and Mr. David Orr received well deserved applause ; Miss Dolly Siva's acting and speaking of the Monologue, " My Lost Galoshes," reflecting great credit on her and her teacher. There were also three sketches —1st, " Votes for Women," by Misses M'Ilwrath, Orr, Patterson, and Messrs. W. Burrows and Robert Orr ; 2nd, " Aunt Anne's Will," by Misses Patterson, Christina Finlay, and M. Hay ; 3rd, " A Christmas Wait," by the children of the Sunday School—Misses M. M'Cormick, Sadie Siva, Dolly Siva, Masters Walter and Alfred Siva, Joseph Orr, and Arnold Williams. Much labour and effort has been expended on these sketches, with the result that both adults and children went through their parts gracefully, and spoke clearly and distinctly. The Lecture Hall was well filled by an appreciative audience.

(The Editor regrets that this report was held over from last month.)

* *

Moneyrea.—A concert and dramatic entertainment was given in the Lyttle Memorial School on Friday evening, January 27th, Mr. A. Kennedy Stewart, J.P., presiding. In the course of his remarks, the Chairman explained that the object of the concert was to raise funds for the maintenance of the fabric. A well-chosen programme was then gone through, and in it the York Street Church Concert Party figured successfully. Under the leadership of Mr. Parkes, the Choir contributed three choruses, which were well received, as were also the solos of Misses Gordon and Parkes, Messrs. D. Irvine and F. Conkey, and the recitations of Miss Allen and Mr. Martin, whilst the humorous songs of Mr. Doherty were loudly applauded and repeatedly encored. Though not of the " party," yet included in the programme were the songs of Miss G. Heron and the violin solos of Messrs. Fullerton and Heron, which were also highly appreciated and encored. Interesting and pleasing was the sketch from " Nicholas Nickleby," entitled, " Miss Fanny Squeers' Tea-party," by the Dickens Fellowship Sketch Party, and the make-ups of Misses Morrow and M'Ivor, Messrs. Jackson and Manning, will not soon be forgotten. Miss Heron and Messrs. Parkes and Yeates were the accompanists. A vote of thanks to the artistes and the singing of the National Anthem ended the programme.

* *

Newry.—On Tuesday evening, 4th February, the Annual Sunday School Soiree was held in the school-room of the above Church. After a few words by the pastor of the congregation (Rev. G. J. Slipper) and the singing of a hymn, tea was served. The following ladies acted as tea-makers :—Mrs. Slipper, the Misses S. Warnock, Scott, Thompson, and M. M'Combe. Games were indulged in by some of the younger folk, while others prepared themselves to give their long-anticipated entertainment, which consisted of a nigger performance by the " Golliwog Minstrels," a troupe of children who had been trained by Mrs. Slipper. The performance throughout was excellent, and reflected credit upon Mrs. Slipper, Mr. James Thompson, who acted as stage manager, and the youthful performers. The prizes gained in the Sunday School were then presented by Mrs. Andrew Henning, after which

Mr. C. Warnock, Superintendent, gave a short report of the year's work. The attendance of the younger members of the school had not been up to the average. This no doubt was due to the fact that there had been a great deal of sickness among the children in the spring, and also that last summer had been a particularly wet one, which had affected the attendance of the country children. He emphasised the fact that he would like the parents to give the children all the encouragement they could to come out both regularly and punctually.

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